

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee,

Hello. Thank you for the opportunity to testify against this bill. My name is Greg Ticknor, and I am 19 years old.

I have been trapping since I was 13 years old, and have attended the Montana Youth Trapping Camp 4 times. I have taken Hunter's Safety and Bow hunter's Safety, and am what my mother calls a Life-Long Learner. I love to acquire more knowledge. I enjoy learning, and while I am interested in taking one of the many Trappers safety courses that the MTA and FW&P put on throughout the state, I think that it is over-regulation to even consider making them required by law. There are adequate laws on the books already to address any issues that come up between trappers and others who also choose to recreate outdoors. These laws need to be enforced towards both sides, whether it is trappers who don't obey set back restrictions, or dog owners who don't obey leash laws or exercise control over their animals. There is a sense of responsibility that needs to be accepted by both sides. More legislation will not do this. If this bill passes, it will not appease the Anti-trappers, it is only a stepping stone towards them achieving their ultimate goal of eradicating trapping. As a Montana native, I feel that it is important to preserve the trapping heritage of our state.

There are several issues that this bill does not address, such as: who will set the standards for the ethics that are sure to be included in the class, where is the funding to come from, who decides which curriculum to adopt? If this begins to resemble a animal rights course, who has the power to change that and bring it back into balance? FW&P in conjunction with the MTA already offers a trappers education course that is free to the public. This is adequate for the state's needs.

This bill will carry a fiscal note. Similar bills were introduced in 2005 and 2007. Both carried significant price tags, the lesser being \$9500. With anticipated state revenues plunging, Montana simply does not have the funds for this unnecessary legislation even if it were a legitimate consideration. FWP currently helps to fund the Youth Trapping Camp that is held annually to educate youth about trapping. If I am reading the previous bills fiscal notes correctly, the money that was used to help fund the camp will be pulled to help fund this class. This would be a grave mistake; the kids will learn much more through the camp than in a classroom, and some kids may not be able to afford to attend without the scholarship that FW&P now offers.

I would like to leave you with a quote from Thomas Jefferson:

*"Tired men prefer the calm of despotism to the tempestuous sea of liberty."*

To me, that means that some men would rather be ruled by a tyrannical government who makes every decision for them, than to have to wade through the work that sometimes comes with ensuring freedom.

I would much rather live in a land that gives people too much freedom than one that tries to rule your every action. Laws should be necessary, not just a preference of some. This bill is not necessary, nor can it be afforded.

Please vote AGAINST House Bill 62, and for trapper's rights.

Thank you for your time.  
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